

Governor Announces House Delay Cost Mississippi an Additional \$40 Million In Health Care Trust Fund Dollars

“Political Procrastination”

Governor Haley Barbour and Senate Medicaid negotiators announced today that due to continuing delay by House leaders during the Medicaid crisis, an additional \$40 million will now have to be drawn from the Health Care Trust Fund to fill the \$268 million deficit.

“The House has finally acknowledged that Health Care Trust Fund dollars have to be used to fix Medicaid. A fact the rest of the state has known for weeks. Unfortunately, their delay in accepting the obvious has cost Mississippi millions,” said Governor Haley Barbour.

Governor Barbour and Senate leaders had earlier hoped that only \$200 million would have to be drawn from the Fund and \$68 million would be saved in the program by Medicaid program savings the Legislature was considering enacting before the end of the fiscal year.

“The Senate acknowledged that Trust Fund dollars had to be used weeks ago. But the House’s political procrastination has risked the health care of Mississippi Medicaid recipients and unnecessarily cost Mississippi \$40 million,” said Governor Barbour.

The Legislature faced a January deadline set by a federal judge to address Medicaid’s finances. Then, the Division of Medicaid announced it would completely run out of money to pay providers on February 28. Most recently, Medicaid announced it had secured a loan to continue the program but only until this Friday.

“Medicaid’s deficit was announced in December. It could have been fixed months ago. There is no reason in delaying solving a problem when the solution is available right now,” he said.

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